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ABSTRACT

In response to the need for improved international trade in Ireland, an undergraduate program of applied languages and international marketing was developed at the National Institute for Higher Education, a unique Irish technological university in Dublin. In the first year, students study French and German and four business subjects (marketing, economics, business organization and management, and quantitative methods). In the second year, the syllabus is similarly divided between dual language study, now including commercial language, and four additional business subjects (law, accounting, managerial economics, and statistics and marketing research). At this point the student must choose a major language and the international marketing topic for his or her third year thesis. The third year is spent studying abroad in a comparable university and developing the thesis, intended as an exercise in balancing academic studies and practical experience. The final year is spent polishing language skills and studying international trade, international marketing, marketing management, and consumer behavior. Establishing and maintaining foreign linkages with industry and institutions has been a larger task than anticipated, but has evolved through persistence. Funding has come from a variety of sources. Industrial placement for the year abroad and interinstitutional/international program coordination are goals for future program development. (MSE)

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"INTO THE MELTING POT": THE DEVELOPMENT OF A EUROPEAN DIMENSION IN A 4-YEAR DEGREE PROGRAMME IN LANGUAGES AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

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"Into the melting pot": (the development of a European dimension in a 4-year degree programme in Languages and International Marketing

In order to appreciate fully the significance of this programme overview, it is necessary to understand something of the context from which it has emerged. Firstly the geographical context. Ireland is an island nation with the youngest population in Europe: over half of its three and a half million population is under the age of 25. Unemployment is unacceptably high and continues to rise. Government, industrialists and trade unionists all agree on the necessity to create jobs, and all recognise the need for Ireland to create new markets for its produce and to export in order to survive. Traditionally, Ireland's major overseas market has been the United Kingdom. Over the past decade, however, the proportion of Irish exports going to Britain has decreased, while the amount going to her other, continental, trading partners has increased. An example of this European dimension to the Irish economy is the fact that West German investment in Ireland is second only to investment from the United States.

Given such a young population, which is also, incidentally, the fastest growing population in Europe, successive Irish governments have recognised the crucial role to be played by education in building for the nation's future. In the university sector this recognition became tangible reality in 1980 with the opening of the National Institute for Higher Educaion in Dublin. The NIHE (as it has become known) was designed to be radically different from the traditional universities in its aims and objectives, but to be in every way equal to them in quality. It is today a technological university, in international terms, and has a clear mission to respond positively and creatively to national manpower needs.

The School of Applied Languages at the NIHE reflects this technological emphasis in its philosophy, and in the degree programmes it offers. The term "applied" indicates that our basic aim is the teaching of modern languages, not principally as an academic discipline, not simply as a communicative skill in a general sense, but rather as a professional education that is highly relevant to a limited number of specific career outlets. We have, therefore, set out to identify precise areas in which a professional expertise in one or more foreign languages would be of particular and demonstrable use to Irish industry and commerce.

Since there were no other applied language departments in any of the Irish universities, either North or South of the border, and since the prevailing view of the traditional university language department was that "applied language studies" lacked serious academic credibility, it was obvious to me, when I was asked to form a school of Applied Languages at the NIHE, that some observers were expecting the creation of a servicing school which would play second - or even third, fiddle to other, more important schools. Had this in fact happened, I believe it would have had quite disastrous effects for the academic credibility of the discipline of applied languages as well as for the motivation of the teaching staff who would be working and researching in the school.

This sense of academic credibility and identity was part of the rationale that lay behind the creation of our first undergraduate degree programme - a BA in Languages and International Marketing, which enrolled its first students in October 1981. This is a joint honours degree, in which equal emphasis and equal recognition are given to the study of modern languages on the one hand, and business studies (with a specialisation in international marketing) on the

other. The aim of the programme is to produce a graduate who will be capable of working in the field of export selling and international marketing, and who will thereby enhance Ireland's chances of increasing her share of the European market. Our team of course designers felt that a knowledge of <u>two</u> modern languages would give the graduate greater career mobility, and this was borne out by market research amongst potential employers. The main objective of the business lecturers in the team was to produce a graduate capable of working in the commercial sector, specifically in the field of marketing. That of our linguists was to ensure that this graduate would be able to operate effectively in a French or German speaking environment. We were unanimous in our view that these objectives were complementary rather than separate, and we were fortunate in the respect that this programme was among our first ventures. We were not faced with the worst aspects of having to convince people who had spent years treading a traditional path of the advantages of branching out and trying something new. We had all come to work at the NIHE precisely because of our interest in innovation.

The degree in Languages and International Marketing is a four year programme. It has an annual intake of 45 students, who are chosen on the basis of open competition on school Leaving Certificate results from what has now become a yearly figure of 1700-1800 applicants. On average, just over 70% of our students are girls. This is a reflection of traditional attitudes in the Irish secondary school system where girls tend to be pushed towards what are seen as the more soft, arts/humanities subjects while boys are channeled into more masculine, hard, scientific or relevant disciplines.

In Year 1 of the programme all students study two languages (French and German). An honours result in School Leaving certificate French is a course

requirement, since French is by far the most widely studied European language in Irish secondary schools. Recognising the minority position of German at this level, we decided to run two streams of German in the first year of our course, a beginners stream, and a normal stream (for students with honours in both French and German). The conventional student with both languages at entry takes 5 hours per week of each language. The ab initio German student takes 5 hours French, but 9 hours per week of a special beginners German course. These beginners will sit a slightly different German language examination at the end of their first year, but by the end of their second year they have proved themselves eminently capable of competing on more than equal terms with their conventional counterparts. In some respects they are advantaged, since their motivation to learn is very high and they do not have to face the ordeal of "un-learning" false data and deep-rooted errors from several years of school German!

The other half of the students' time in first year involves the study of four business subjects: Marketing, Economics, Business Organisation and Management, and Quantitative Methods. In terms of class contact hours these subjects represent 10 hours per week. This has to be set alongside a further 10 hours per week for the two languages (or 14 hours if the students is a beginner in German).

The eventual object of the joint structure of this programme is the integration of the languages and the business studies. In the first year, however, (and the same is true to some extent of the second year), we feel it is essential to lay solid foundations in each of the discipline areas independently. Hence the emphasis in the language courses (with the exception of the ab initio German) is placed upon consolidation of basic skills such as aural comprehension, oral proficiency, written accuracy, and upon the acquisition of a general backcloth of knowledge which is known in French as

"civilisation et institutions" and in German as "Landeskunde". These pursuits account for over 80% of the students' activities in language studies: the remaining time is devoted to what we call French Reading Programme and German Reading Programme. This syllabus runs for 15 weeks, one hour per week for each language, anc consists of the study of two 20th Century texts in each language, which are considered important for the insights they offer into contemporary France and Germany. It must be admitted that we are still asked, even by our colleagues from the Business Faculty, whac precisely is the relevance of "literature" on such a strongly career-orientated degree. This concern is understandable. The role played by Economics, Management or Marketing in the professional life of the export sales manager is obvious and quantifiable. The necessity for him to speak a foreign language is recognised, though sometimes only reluctantly. The need for him to understand, respond to, and be able to function in the foreign cultural and intellectual environment in which he has to do business is a concept not readily grasped.

The second year of the programme is similarly structured, with the students' time again equally divided between the study of the two languages and a further group of four business subjects. The new business subjects are Law, Accounting, Managerial Economics, and Statistics and Marketing Research. In this year the students have 6 hours pwe week tuition in each language. There are three distinct components in the second year French and German courses: a "standard" language syllabus (largely translation and essay writing) of 3 hours per week: one hour per week of commercial language: and two hours per week of Literature in Society (based on 19th and 20th century texts, and ranging from fiction to sociology).

About half way through the second year, the student has, with the assistance of his other tutors, to make two important choices which will determine much of what will happen to him or her in the final two years of the programme. The first of these choices is that of major language, the seond is the international marketing topic on which the third year thesis (or, as we call it, Project) will be written.

A number of criteria govern these choices. On the language side, there is the obvious advantage to the student of choosing whichever is his/her stronger subject - French or German, since the better the grasp of the language the quicker the student will be likely to adapt to the foreign environment, and the easier it will be for him or her to participate in marketing classes of an appropriate level at the foreign university. Similarly, the greater the student's language competence, the more effectifve will be his or her research work while abroad. This means that the choice of major language is in many ways related to, and (some of my colleagues might even feel) dependant upon the choice of Project topic. The sole condition governing the third year Project is that it shall be on an international marketing related topic. A sample list of previous years' Project titles is given in the Appendix to this paper. There is little point in allowing a student to proceed with a research proposal if, for example, none of the regions in which our partner universities are situated has an appropriate industrial, commercial or social infrastructure. Therefore a considerable amount of time in the latter part of second year is devoted to tutorial work with students on these two major issues.

Before turning to a detailed examination of the Year Abroad, I will present a brief description of the final year of this programme. This, I hope, will

provide the sort of programme overview which is necessary for a proper understanding of the aims and objectives of the Year Abroad itself. As we oiriginally designed it, the final year was a joint honours combination in which students specialised in International Marketing (studying four subjects: International Trade, International Marketing, Marketing Management and Consumer behaviour) and in one language (either French or German). A combination of factors, including student demand and requirements stipulated in many job advertisements in the field of marketing, caused us to revise the languages side of the package so that there would be choice for the student:specialising in one language as before, or taking a major/minor language combination. This has proved particularly attractive to the very large number of students who have come to us with no German. Under the original course structure many of them had felt reluctant to abandon German entirely after they had spent two years acquiring quite a respectable level of competence in it.

Under our new structure, the single language student (for example in German) will take 5 hours per week of a cognate German for Business and German "Landeskunde" syllabus, 2 hours per week of either Economic Translation or Consecutive Interpreting. and 2 hours per week of a special option (19th Century German satire or The language of advertising: a German/English comparison). The major/minor student (for example major French will take 5 hours per week of French for Business, 3 hours per week of minor German, and 2 hours per week of a French special option (French social movements of the 1970's or 6 French writers and the threatened devaluation of man).

Remembering that the specific intention of the overall programe was to produce a graduate capable of working in the spheres of export selling, and/or

international marketing, - and furthermore a graduate capable of operating effectively in a French or German speaking environment, let us now turn our attention to the European dimension of the degree: the Year Abroad.

One of the most ambitious aims of any collaborative enterprise is that the heteroclite elements being set together in the venture should somehow become integrated into one harmonious, homogeneous whole. In the case of an undergraduate degree programme such as this, one cannot simply throw the syllabi on the table and sit back in the pious hope that the students will spontaneously be able to "read the runes" and make their own synthesis. In NIHE Dublin we concluded that this synthesis or integraton had to be engineered, and that the most obvious stage of the progremme to achieve it was the third year. We did toy with the idea of having some of the business syllabi in Year 2 taught through French and German, but rejected it for two very simple reasons. We felt that a sound grasp of both the foreign language and the business studies concepts was an essential requirement and this would not have been achieved by the end of first year, and an even more obvious obstacle was the shortage of suitably qualified academic staff! So it was in the course of one academic year, spent either in France or in Germany, that we were to attempt the fusion of foreign language and international marketing studies in our students' minds.

In theory this all appears fiendishly simple. You send your students to a comparable foreign university, where the acadmeic programmes are broadly speaking similar to your own, and hve them take a package of courses in business subjects that will consolidate and deveop what they have already learnt with you, and eventually prepare them for their advanced marketing studies of final year. In addition to these business classes, you would also expect your students to take courses in language and area studies.

Our aim, therefore, in developing the concept of the Year Abroad has been to consider this period of studying a foreign university as a formal, integral part of the 4 year programme. We feel that it is of vital importance that our students are offically registered at the foreign institution so that they enjoy the same status as the local students. It is also crucial that the courses they follow should be the normal courses offered to all students, rather than special programmes designed for foreign visitors. Our graduates will, after all, find themselves competing in the business world with graduates of the very French or German universities where they have spent their year. Why should we artifically cushion them against the first real opportunity they have to measure themselves against the opposition? Of course this has to be done very carefully, after having given a lot of thought to the strengths and weaknesses of the particular student. If the challenge of a particular coure element at the foreign university is linguistically or conceptually too great for the visiting student, he or she may very quickly become demotivated and demoralized. Let us not forget that "cultural shock" can oftern transform some of the most straightforward tasks into a nightmare for the innocent abroad.

We were acutely aware, when we first planned this degree, of the need ot maintain a particularly delicate balance between academic study and practical experience. Our second aim for the Year Abroad has, therefore, been to give the students the opportinity to put some of the knowledge they have gained in their first two years of business studies to some practical use. This is where the 3rd year Project comes in During the year each student is expected to research a topic in the field of intenational marketing, and to write up his or her findings in the form of a minor thesis. Originally, we had hoped that this could have been a single piece of work written in the foreign language: in other words, documentary proof of the student's ability to synthesise the two sides of the degree. It was, as I have already mentioned,

our inability to appoint business staff with foreign language competence that caused us to abandon this idea. A further objection was that, in an Irish context, very few of the potential employers of our future graduates would be capable of reading a thesis written in French or German, and we felt that the thesis could be a useful adjunct to the students' curriculum vitae. (This absence of foreign language skills amongst Irish businessmen was, incidentally, further vindication that we were on the right track with our degree concept!) In our current structure, therefore, the student writes a 10,000 word thesis in English, supplemented by a 4,000 word synopsis in his or her major language. To date we have tried to ensure that the thesis is not a library based activity, but that it involves the student interactively with the foreign industrial and commercial sectors, and with the consumers (through questionnaires and market research surveys).

There is, of course, one element of practical experience which is still missing at least from the formal structure of our programme, and that is the industrial placement. In retrospect, we ought perhaps to have tried to build this in right from the very start, but we did not... for a variety of reasons. I suppose, as an academic and a linguist, I felt it was preferable to establish the principle of the Year Abroad initally in an academic framework, in the expectation that a strong structure of foreign university links would give us a platform on which to build future elements of industrial placement. Also, it must be said, the sheer enormity of the task of setting up exchange contracts with six separate insitituions made the search for industrial placements a real impossibility. Now that we are more established and have more staff involved in the programme, the industrial placement is a more realistic item on our agenda.

It might well seem ingenuous to have opted for links with six foreign universities and then to complain about the burden of work involved. There is, however, no way that we could have achieved our objectives by sending larger groups of students to fewer centres. A group of 6-8 Irish students going to Dortmund University, for example, stands a reasonable chance of being easily absorbed and integrated into the general student body. A much larger group runs the risk of becoming inward-looking and self-sufficient. The larger group is also often quite undesirable from the point of view of the host university, for which it causes logistic problems of class size, staff involvement, and physical accommodation.

As I have already pointed out, the process of setting up these foreign links seems very simple in theory. In practice it proved to be a lot more difficult than we had imagined. From one point of view, it was quite an advantage to be in a start-up situation. We did not have other languagee programmes already running, so there was time to devote to the planning and development of this new concept. In other ways it was a handicap. None of our business staff had any previous knowledge of continental European business schools, and none had any foreign language competence. Knowledge of foreign universities among the language staff was restricted to the area of their own academic research interests, and my own experience of placing students in continental universities had been gained mostly in the languages/humanities area. It was, therefore, going to be something of a problem identifying appropriate potential partner institutions. We needed to learn, and learn fast, about business education at university level in France and Germany.

The cultural services of the French and German embassies proved very willing to assist us, and were able to provide directories listing all colleges together with the degrees and diplomas they offered. Beyond this, however,

the embassies could provide nothing of immediate help, which was hardly surprising since their cultural services had for decades been geared up to support the activities of the traditional universities. The idea of a year at a foreign university as an integral part of a degree programme was enough of a novelty in itself, without the added complexity of business studies! So, it was up to us to select our own targets. This was 1981. Our first group of students was scheduled to go abroad in October 1983. In so far as Germany was concerned, we identified three centres where Marketing seemed to feature prominently: the Business Faculties of the Universities of Cologne, Dortmund and the Technische Hochschule Aachen. Very early in the process of information exchange, our colleagues in Aachen withdrew from the running because they felt that our respective degree structures were incompatible. We then contacted the University of Trier, were received favourably, and since then our three German partners have remained Cologne, Dortmund and Trier.

One of the early difficulties, and this was as true for France as it was for Germany, was the lack of knowledge about NIHE Dublin. Not only did we have to sell our German colleagues the concept of a degree in Languages and International Marketing (for which they had no real parallel), but we had to convince them not only to receve students <u>from</u>, but also send their own students <u>to</u> a brand new institution that they had never heard of. Although I did not think of it this way at the time, this was my first experiecne of the practice of marketing and selling! If a genuine exchange was going to take place, then we also had to persuade the foreign student to come to Dublin: no easy task, since his degree programme does <u>not</u> include a mandatory period of study abroad.

In the case of Dortmund and Trier, the task was made less difficult by the fact that we were dealing with two relatively young universities. Dortmund, which incidentally turned out to have the first Chair of International

Marketing created in Germany, responded very quickly and positively to our overtures and we had a formal exchange contract signed with them inside a year. Trier reacted with equal enthusiasm, though has not to date felt that there was any advantage to be gained from having a formal written agreement. Both universities received students from Dublin in 1983-84, and by the following year had generated sufficient interest in our exchange scheme for the 1984-85 session to work on a totally reciprocal basis. The presence at NIHE Dublin of this group of German students has contributed greatly to the motivation and the "international" identity of our own Irish students on the 1st and 2nd years of their degree.

In the case of Cologne, we have experienced a slight difficulty which is affecting the global administration and coordination of the Year Abroad. Cologne University is an old established, highly prestigeous monolith. Its Business Faculty has four times as many students as the current total student population at NIHE Dublin. It is involved in a great many exchange arrangements of its own with other foreign universities, and while it has been quite willing to accept our students on an informal basis, (i.e. where the agreement is a personal one centring on the Professor of Marketing rather than a corporate one based on Faculty or University).

In the first instance, in 1983-84. they were quite happy to recive a group of our students, but did not have any interest in sending some of their own students to Dublin. The presence, however, of a small contingent of Irish students in Cologne University had its effect on the German student population, and the University's Academisches Auslandsamt was flooded with enquiries from students wishing to study at NIHE Dublin. So in the current session, we now have reciprocity - but on a semi-unofficial level. It will become evident, from the concluding sections of my presentation, why this sort of arrangement is less than satisfactory.

When it came to the French universities, we had an amazing piece of good fortune just as we were about to being our search in 1981. A representative of ESSCA (the Ecole Superieure des Sciences Commerciales d'Angers) was then touring Irish universities in search of a possible student exchange link. The prospect of NIHE's cooperation with ESSCA was greatly enhanced by the lack of response to their initiative evinced by our counterparts in the more traditional universities. Other factors which played a decisive role in bringing the two institutions togetrher were similar vocational professional thrust in their philosophies, common commitment to the international dimension, smiliarities in course content, and the not altogether negligeable fact that both the principal negotiators were linguists. A formal contract between NIHE and ESSCA was signed in 1982, and, very much like our links with Dortmund and Trier, this has proved to be a model in international cooperation.

Our second French link is the the Institut Universitaire de Technologie of the Claude Bernard University in Lyon. This again has proved to be an excellent link. The great attraction of the IUT's in France is their vocational orientation, and IUT Lyon enjoys an excellent reputation for its relationship with French industry and commerce. In terms of the administration and coordination of our exchange everything has run extrremely smoothly. The only problem we have is that, for the moment at least, the IUT's only run a two year cycle towards a diploma that is equal in standing to the DEUG. While the quality of this two year programme is identical to that of the first two years of university studies, the IUT cannot on its own proivide 3rd or 4th year courses to stretch and challenge the more able among the students we send out. The most obvious solution to this problem is for our students to continue taking the majority of their courses at the IUT, but to supplement these with more advanced programmes from the university itself. This does not even become a "political" problem, since all the IUT staff are employed to lecture at Lyon university as well as the IUT.

Our third French connection has proved to be the most difficult of all our foreign university links. I think it might be useful to stress here that none of the difficulties we have encountered can in any way be attributed to a lack of interest or of goodwill on the part of the universities with which we have been dealing, so when I speak of "difficulties", I intend no inferred criticism or blame. The Institut des Etudes Commerciales of Grenoble University, which has a very strong interest in Marketing, very generously agreed to take 2 of our students on a unilateral basis in 1983-84, and a further two in the current session in return for a 6 month industrial placement in Ireland for one of their students. This proved administratively very difficult for us, and quite embarrassing publicly when the French student did not arrive to take up his placement! Subsequent negotiations with Grenoble to try to establish student exchange reciprocity are currently at an impasse over the number of students to be exchanged each year, and the respective financial burdens for the French and the Irish students.

One of the major concerns for us has always been the cost to the student of the year abroad, especially given that the expense is compulsory, not optional. To date our programme has benefitted from the fact that French and German university accommodation and restaurant charges are heavily subsidised. If we adopted, as Grenoble is proposing, an ISEP-type scheme, many of our students imply could not afford to go abroad.

This brings me logically to the question of funding an international exchange programme. There are basically two sorts of cost: the cost to the universities concerned of administring the exchange, and the cost to the student of participating in it. In 1980-81, the year in which the degree was planned, the major expense was travel to make initial contacts not only with

those universities that were to become our future partners, but also to a variety of other institutions on specific fact-finding missions. The funding for this travel was provided out of the NIHE central budget, and was obviously regarded as venture capital to facilitate the development of an idea that appeared to have potential. It must be admitted here, that we were in a start-up situation and in an academic environment where innovation was encouraged. It was a truly enviable position in which to find oneself.

In the course of that first year, we submitted an application to the European Commission in Brussels for one of their Short Study Visits Grants. These grants are normally awarded to individuals (as opposed to institutions), and they are designed to help academic to meet and exchange ideas on projects of mutual interest with fellow academics in other member states of the European Community. In fact I applied for two of these grants, one in the field of languages and international marketing and, in the 1981-82 session another in the field of translating and interpreting. Certain lessons may be learned from the fact that I was successful with the former, but not with the latter.

If one assumes that the quality of the preparation of both applications was equal (i.e. valid project, reasonable budget and time scale, genuine preliminary contacts established), then one might be tempted to conclude that the Commission favoured the marketing project over the translating project. Another possibility is that they simply wanted to ensure that their monies would be spread across a wider spectrum of colleges. This means that you may have an excellent idea that needs funding, but is is either not fashionable or perhaps too fashionable. Before seeking funds, know your field and your competition. Also be aware that a first refusal may simply mean they like your idea, but for a variety of reasons they cannot support you this year. The secret is to do your homework beforehand. Nobody is going to subsidise you on a speculative jaunt to Europe "to look at a few business schools".

This is borne out by the fact that the second round of visits to France and Germany, under the Short Study Visit scheme, resulted in student exchange agreements with three of the six universities visited. When, in 1982, we applied again to the Commission for the next stage of support - a Joint Study Programme Grant, we in fact received two of these (one for our link with Dortmund/Lyon, the other for the ESSCA link). Both Joint Study Programme grants were renewed for the current academic year, and they have proved invaluable in permitting staff mobility between the partner universities, and (as a new development this year) in providing a small amount of financial support to all students participating in the exchange.

There is also, in our experience at least, evidence to suggest that once your programme has begun to attract money, it will continue to do so. This will not necessarily happen spontaneously. Our first example of this is a scholarship awarded to a 3rd year student of our programme by Irish Shell. This was set up in 1982 to mark the 75th jubilee of the company, and came about as a result of a series of wide ranging discussions that had taken place between Shell and the NIHE. Shell decided that they wanted to mark theirjubilee by supporting an aspect of university level education. Their scholarship was to be offered each year for three years beginning in 1982-83. Clearly, the intention to support the field of education had to be present in Shell to begin with, but it is equally evident that the credibility of the languages and international marketing concept had also to be very firmly present in NIHE Dublin. If it had not, Shell would not have taken the risk. The important lesson here is that your academic programme has to be able to stand up to the severest scrutiny from the leaders of industry and commerce.

The most recent development in the area of student sponsorshop for our degree came last year when we received an approach from an external organisation

anxious to be involved in supporting our programme. This was indeed progress! We had started off going out looking for money: now money was coming along looking for us! This organisation was Foir Teoranta, a semi-state body whose main function is to provide financial and managerial support to companies that are having difficulties. The Foir Teoranta sponsorship takes two forms. Firstly, a scholarship to one student through the 3rd and 4th years of the degree, and secondly the sponsorship of a mature student through all four years of the programme. In both instances Foir Teoranta will also place the successful graduate in either their own organisation, or in one of their subsidiary companies, for a two year internship upon graduation. Again, a brief description grossly oversimplifies the process by which this organisation, like Shell, vetted the NIHE in general and this degree programme in particular. The academic cannot go into such a process unprepared. You have to know how much money your programme requires, exactly what it is going to be used for, and have ten good reasons why the people on the other side of the negotiating table should decide to support your course rather than put their money to some other use. It helps considerably if your own university has a department solely concerned with the interface with industry. This we have in NIHE Dublin in the form of our Industrial Liaison Unit.

The funding we have received from these different sources has enabled us to place our students abroad, and to develop the links we have established with our partner institutions in France and Germany. But no amount of financial aid can make a programme work if the will to cooperate is not present amont the different partners. An indication that such a common will exists is that we are currently on the point of awarding to every student who participates in our exchange programme a Certificate in International Business Studies. The certificate, which will be jointly validated by all the partner institutions, will be issued to the student who has successfully completed a course of study

at the host university. Of course we realise that this idea raises a number of problems. While all the Irish students spend a full year in France or Germany, the period spent by the French or German students in Dublin currently ranges from 6 weeks to a complete year. The whole question of equivalences between French, German and Irish qualificatins will have to be taken into consideration too. We have concluded, nonetheless, that the creation of an initial certificate - imperfect as it may be - is a worthwhile achievement in itself, and a clear indication of our future intentions.

The difficulty that we now face is that we have a semi-formal network of seven different university level institutions across three different countries. While the students involved in this international exchange programme may all be loosely grouped together under a common umbrella of European Business studies, the degree programmes on which they are registered at their home universities tend to vary in content. There are, however, two common threads: the study of International Marketing, and the study of the language and the civilisation of a foreign country. What we are striving towards, as a long term objective, is a common academic programme in International Marketing - an agreed syllabus devised by a team of lecturers from each of our seven universities, which would be taught in all seven campuses so that, for example, a German or a French student could decide to take that particular element of his/her degree in Dublin in the knowledge that the programme would be identical to its German or French version. But that is long-term planning, and we and our partners may find that other, quite different, modes of cooperation are more feasible or more desirable as time goes on.

We are unequivocally committed to a shorter term objective, and one on which I should ike to conclude my presentation. The thing, for us, that is essential in our student exchange is that our degree programmes should acquire a European dimension. In the case of NIHE Dublin's Languages and International

Marketing degree we have tried to ensure this by sending our students off in small groups to six European universities, and by receiving French and German students in Dublin in return. What, however, we would be very anxious to achieve is the intreaction between all of the separate experiences gained by each group of students. In respect of our own Irish students, we had originally though that they would have the opportunity to pool their various learning experiences from France and Germany in the course of their final year of studies back in Dublin. That has not been entirely successful, mainly because of the need for the student to readjust back into his/her native culture and to concentrate on tackling the intellectual challenges of the new 4th year syllabi rather than reflecting on third year. Another important element that was missing from this scenario was the presence of the French and German students who had been in dublin while our students were abroad. It became evident that there was a real need for us to reinforce the experience of the Year Abroad for all the students involved, and to demonstrate in a formal way that the European dimension of this educational experience was something that we wanted to stress explicitly - rather than hoping that it would simply emerge implicitly from what we were trying to do.

Before we had even begun to grapple with the implications of this problem a potential solution presented itself to us quite out of the blue. The managers of the newly created Irish Institute of European Affairs in Louvain, near Brussels approached all of the universities in Ireland, inviting them to suggest ways in which they could make use of the IIEA's magnificent campus. It is a former Franciscan seminary completely refurbished, which offers hotel standard accommodation for almost 90 people, and includes lecture theatre and seminar rooms. In addition, it is located within 5 minutes' walk of the Catholic University of Louvain and has access to all its library, computing and laboratory facilities.

The plan that we are currently exploring with our European partners is that we should use the IIEA campus as a focal point for our exchange programme. There are two ways in which this could happen. Firstly,we might consider running a short, 1-2 week, orientation programme for all the exchange students before they go to take up residence in their chosen foreign university. This could cover specific issues related to each group of students, (such as the economy of Ireland or France or Germany: aids to survival in the foreign environment, etc), and it could also deal with the global concept of European integration as the context in which the exchange was taking place. Certainly this would be useful, since it is our experience that the student can never be too well prepared for cultural shock. The second possible format would entail an end of exchange seminar, again lasting between one and three weeks, which would attempt to effect a synthesis of the separate Irish, French and German educational experiences of the Year Abroad. Many of the students would have been involved in research projects during their year, and this could prove a fruitful area for workshops or round table discussions. There are undoubtedly other possibilities, projects we have not yet dreamed of, which may well emerge from future meetings between colleagues from our seven universities, and from sharing our experiences, our successes and failures, with fellow academics elsewhere. It was for that reason that I chose to entitle this presentation "Into the melting pot", for one surely cannot enter into the field of international educational cooperation in the expectation of emerging at the other end with one's own preconceptions totally intact!

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APPENDIX

Titles of projects written by NIHE students during their year abroad

A Review of the French Advertising Market.

A Study of the Metro and its Impact on the People.

A Study of a Potential German Market Segment in Respect of the Irish Tourist Industry.

A Review of the Market Trends for Demersal Fish in the Brittany region.

A Review of the Element of Strategy involved in the Marketing of the Wines of Anjou-Saumur with particular reference to Saumur d'Origine.

A Review of the Potential for Irish beef in France.

Consumer Organisation and Protection in the Federal Republic of Germany.

A Review and Analysis of the Irish Consumer Image in Germany.

An Analysis of Recent Trends in the German Cigarette Industry.

A Review of the Marketing Process of Goats Cheese in the Loire Valley Region.

A Study of the Irish Craft Shops in France, and of a sample Lyon population so that the potential of an Irish craft shop in Lyon could be assessed.

The Implications for Irish Exporters of Manufacturer and Dealer Branding on the West German Market.

A Review of the Role of the Activities of Consumer-Orientated Organisations in influencing Consumers in West Germany.

Regional Advertising Strategies of Two Brands of Dortmunder Beer.

The role of Marketing in the French Political System with particular reference to the 1984 European Elections.

Petrol Stations as a Distribution Outlet in France.

That Lyon as an Industrial Location is Recognised by Irish Entrepreneurs.

A Market Potential Analysis of the Sale of Irish Manufactured Brass Interior Lamps in the Ruhr Region of West Germany.

Ireland as a Holiday Destination for the Youth of Grenoble.

A Review of State Export Promotion in The Federal Republic of Germany.